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POLITICAL TERRORISM IN FRANCE

ANNCR:

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS DEEPLY CONCERNED BY THE UPSURGE OF
POLITICAL TERRORISM....AS HEAR IN THIS BACKGROUND REPORT
BY VOA'S JOHN BUE.

VOICE:

FOLLOWING TWO TERRORIST ATTACKS IN ONE WEEK, ONE AGAINST
THE IRAQI EMBASSY IN PARIS, THE OTHER AGAINST THE PLO OFFICE
THERE, BOTH RESULTING IN TWO DEATHS, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY
ISSUED A STATEMENT CONDEMNING THESE ACTS OF VIOLENCE AND STATING
IT WILL NOT TOLERATE TERRORISM ON ITS SOIL WHOEVER RESORTS TO
IT.

IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS, ELEVEN FOREIGN ENVOYS IN PARIS
HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BY TERRORISTS AND EIGHT OF THEM DIED. THEY
CAME FROM AFRICA, SOUTH AMERICA, THE MIDDLE EAST AND INCLUDE
SEVERAL PLO LEADERS, ONE FROM THE SO CALLED POPULAR FRONT FOR
THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE, A CHADIAN POLITICIAN, AN
URUGUAYAN MILITARY ATTACHE, AND THE TURKISH, BOLIVIAN, AND
MAURITANIAN AMBASSADORS.

THREE YEARS AGO, THE INFAMOUS ILLICH RAMIREZ SANCHEZ -- NICK
NAMED "CARLOS" -- KILLED TWO FRENCH COUNTER-ESPIONAGE AGENTS AND
AN INFORMER. IN THE RECENT SHOOT-OUT-OUTSIDE THE IRAQI EMBASSY
GUARD. A FRENCH POLICE OFFICER WAS KILLED, AS WELL AS AN IRAQI
EMBASSY POLICE UNIONS DEMONSTRATED THEIR DISPLEASURE AT THE FACT
THAT THREE IRAQI EMBASSY GUARDS THEY HOLD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
KILLING OF THEIR COLLEAGUE WERE EXPELLED AS DIPLOMATIC
PERSONNEL INSTEAD OF BEING TRIED IN FRANCE. IRAQ IS FRANCE'S
SECOND LARGEST OIL SUPPLIER AFTER SAUDI ARABIA, IT HAS REPORTEDLY
PURCHASED FRENCH MIRAGE COMBAT PLANES, AND IS NEGOTIATING FOR

THE PURCHASE OF A FRENCH NUCLEAR POWER PLANT.

IN ITS DETERMINATION TO DISCOURAGE TERRORISM, FRANCE IS HANDICAPPED BY ITS PRO-ARAB POLICIES, AS HIGHLIGHTED BY ITS RELEASE EARLY LAST YEAR OF PALESTINIAN EXTREMIST ABU DAOUD, WHO WAS STRONGLY SUSPECTED OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE MUNICH OLYMPICS TERRORIST KILLINGS. BUT, GENERALLY SPEAKING, FRANCE HAS SWITCHED ITS POLICY OF GIVING ABSOLUTE PRIORITY TO SAFEFUARDING THE LIFE OF HOSTAGES THROUGH LENGTHY NEGOTIATIONS WITH TERRORISTS. PROMPTED BY THE UPSURGE OF TERRORISM AND WITH PUBLIC OPINION DEEPLY INFLUENCED BY THE SUCCESSFUL ENTEBBE AND MOGADISHU RAIDS, FRANCE IS NOW ADOPTING AN INTRANSIGENT ATTITUDE TOWARD HOSTAGE-TAKERS AND OTHER TERRORISTS.

BUT THE TWO RECENT INCIDENTS WITHIN FOUR DAYS OF EACH OTHER SHOW HOW VULNERABLE FRANCE AND ESPECIALLY PARIS CAN BE TO INFILTRATION BY TERRORIST ELEMENTS. FRANCE IS A TRADITIONAL HAVEN FOR POLITICAL REFUGEES AND PARIS HAS A VERY LARGE VARIED AND FREELY FLUCTUATING FOREIGN POPULATION. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER ITS NEWLY PROFESSED TOUGH STANCE WILL SUCCESSFULLY COUNTERBALANCE THE FRENCH CAPITAL'S BUILT-IN FEATURES AS A POTENTIAL BASE AND SOUNDING-BOARD FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE.

JS/RD